September 1991

United Nations programme on ageing - in brief

This *informal* note has been prepared in response to enquiries about the United Nations programme on ageing — and its focal point: The United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV/CSDHA).

UNOV/CSDHA is the nucleus within the United Nations Secretariat for all activities relating to social policy and social development. Ageing is one of many social issues addressed by UNOV/CSDHA. Margaret J. Anstee, head of UNOV and Director-General of CSDHA, is the Coordinator-Designate of an action programme on ageing for 1992 and beyond. Implementation of the action programme is guided by Henryk J. Sokalski, Director of the Social Development Division (SDD); Mohammad Sharif, Chief of the Developmental Social Welfare and Social Integration Branch (DSW&SIB), and Alexandre Sidorenko, Officer-in-Charge of the Ageing Unit (DSW&SIB/SDD).

Enquiries may be addressed to:

United Nations Office at Vienna/
Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
(UNOV/CSDHA)
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna
Austria

Telephone 21131 5042
Telex 135612
Fax 232156

Contents:

Why a UN programme on ageing?
Early history
International Plan of Action on Ageing
1992 - The tenth anniversary of World Assembly on Ageing
Setting targets for the year 2001
1 October - The International Day for the Elderly
Publications
Research
Training
Technical cooperation
Resource mobilization
Major dates
Key participants

0991B/1 V.91-28868

Why a UN programme on ageing?: The "age of ageing", the "grey revolution", "humanity's coming of age": these and similar phrases are now part of common discourse and have no uncertain statistical basis. In the 75 years from 1950 to 2025, the world elderly population (persons 60 years of age and above) will have increased from 200 million to 1.2 billion, or from 8 to 14 per cent of the total global population. Among the elderly, the "old" old (those who are 80 years of age and above) will have grown from 13 million in 1950 to 137 million in 2025. The total world population will have grown by a factor of little more than three, the elderly will have grown by a factor of six and the "old" old by a factor of ten. First to age, the developed countries are adjusting and refining policies and programmes, especially for the very old. The developing countries, projected to age more quickly in the coming decades than developed countries have aged in the past, are gradually introducing ageing policies and programmes. The ageing of populations in developing countries is rendered critical by two factors: a weak institutional infrastructure for accommodating an increasing number and proportion of the elderly, and the uncertainty that the family will be able to continue providing care and solidarity for its elderly members as in the past.

The UN programme on ageing draws attention to the impact of the ageing of populations on national, community, and family life and co-ordinates a global response to it in cooperation with States members of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

Early history: The question of ageing was first taken up by the United Nations at the initiative of Argentina. In 1948, Argentina presented a draft declaration on old age rights to the General Assembly, which the Assembly submitted to the Economic and Social Council. The Council in turn requested the Secretary-General to draft a report on the matter for its consideration, which he did in 1950 entitled "Welfare of the Aged: Old Age Rights". It was not then evident that the world's population structure would change so dramatically and that the ageing in both the developed and developing countries would come to constitute such a substantial proportion of human society. Thus, an interval of 20 years lapsed before, in 1969, the question was once more taken up and was placed on the agenda of the General Assembly, this time at the initiative of Malta. This initiative was followed up throughout the 1970s and led, in 1982, to the convening in Vienna of the World Assembly on Ageing.

International Plan of Action on Ageing: The International Plan of Action on Ageing was adopted at the World Assembly on Ageing in 1982. It is the first policy instrument on ageing at a global level. UN specialized agencies and bodies, governments, experts, the elderly and non-governmental organizations participated in drafting it. Since the Plan's adoption in 1982, the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (UNOV/CSDHA) has monitored its implementation and reported on this each year to the General Assembly. Each 4 years UNOV/CSDHA has conducted a global survey to assist the Commission for Social Development in appraising the Plan's implementation - the first appraisal took place in 1985, the second in 1989, and the third is due to take place in 1993.

1992 - The tenth anniversary of World Assembly on Ageing: The tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Ageing falls in 1992. It is being observed throughout the world by national and international bodies. To promote anniversary activities, UNOV/CSDHA has issued, in the Bulletin on Ageing (No. 1 1991), a compendium of suggestions for observing 1992 with special emphasis on national and local activities. Many ideas for collaboration of the formal and informal sectors at the local level are given. An international calendar of events as of March 1991 is included. The Bulletin is being distributed throughout the world in English, French and Spanish.

United Nations activities to mark the year include, for example, the issue of a United Nations commemorative stamp on ageing, and possibly also a medal for the decade 1992 to 2001. The Department of Public Information is planning to issue a booklet, feature articles, public service announcements, and a short documentary film on ageing as well as highlights on ageing in the television magazine "UN in Action".

Posters, wall charts, calendars, information kits, surveys and videos on ageing are being planned throughout the United Nations system including by : UNOV/CSDHA, the Department of Public Information, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the Statistical Office, and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). Several non-governmental organizations are planning similar activities; at the time of writing these included: HelpAge International, the International Federation on Ageing, the International Federation of Organizations of the Elderly (FIAPA), and the International Council of Nurses. The European Community plans a series of activities which would simultaneously mark the tenth anniversary as well as its own preparations for 1993, the European Year of the Elderly and Solidarity between the Generations.

Setting targets for the year 2001: The challenge for the decade 1992 to 2001 lies in developing a practical strategy, organized around a short list of well defined targets on ageing. During 1991 and the early part of 1992, UNOV/CSDHA is eliciting the support of the UN system and its Member States as well as non-governmental organizations, individual experts and practitioners in developing the strategy. Several studies and meetings are planned which will focus on setting suitable targets on ageing for the year 2001 and on effective strategies for reaching them.

Target-setting for the year 2001 is intended to serve as a catalyst of new thinking, better planning, courageous programming, effective cooperation, resourceful fund-raising, and practical training programmes in the 1990s. The selected global targets will be presented to the General Assembly in 1992 for review and endorsement.

READEX FICHE

1 October - International Day for the Elderly: The General Assembly has designated 1 October as International Day for the Elderly (resolution 45/106). On 1 October 1991, therefore, this Day will be observed for the first time throughout the world.

By designating a special Day for the elderly, the Assembly was giving recognition to the real and potential contribution of the elderly to development, and drawing attention to a demographic phenomenon: the greying of populations, the "age of ageing".

Suggested activities for observing the Day:

- Statements by heads of State, municipalities and organizations;
- Observances at United Nations offices throughout the world;
- Announcements at major conferences taking place on 1 October;
- News announcements in radio, television and the press;
- Photographic and poster displays in public areas;
- Essay and photographic competitions in schools and the media;
- Youth and elderly debates in schools and community centres;
- Inter-generational cooperation on environmental protection;
- Skills exchange among the elderly of different countries;
- Seminars and lectures at universities and libraries.

Suggested themes for the activities might include:

- Individual life histories seen against major events;
- The contributions of elderly women in history, and in the family;
- New roles for the elderly in the years 2020 and 2040;
- Care-giving by the family as a unit;
- Four- and five-generation families in the community;
- Cross-national cooperation on research and training on ageing.

Activities held on the Day and reported to UNOV/CSDHA will be selected for inclusion in the Bulletin on Ageing.

Publications: Four important publications on ageing to be issued by UNOV/CSDHA in 1992, focusing special attention on the needs of planners and practitioners in developing countries, include The World Ageing Situation (second edition); Ageing: Programme recommendations at the national level for the year 2001; Technical guidelines on the participation of the elderly in development; Guide to reaching selected targets on ageing by the year 2001. A fifth publication, the Profiles of National Co-ordinating Mechanisms on Ageing will contain information on Government-appointed national focal points on ageing in 93 countries. As well, UNOV/CSDHA issues the Bulletin on Ageing three times a year. A wide range of publications on ageing is produced by other entities in the United Nations system.

Research: Various research activities on ageing are underway throughout the United Nations system. UNOV/CSDHA is currently implementing, to cite one example, an innovative applied research and training project entitled "Developmental Implications of Demographic Change: Global Population Ageing". This research aims to identify the developmental implications of population ageing, assess the contributions of the elderly to development, and suggest policy options to enhance these contributions. The first phase of the project, covering four countries in the Latin America and Carribean and Asia and Pacific regions - Chile, the Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka and Thailand - is now under way. The second phase of the project will take place in four countries in Africa and Western Asia. When completed, the project will provide an empirical basis for policy development in developing countries that are confronted with the ageing of their populations. Funding for this project comes from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with co-financing from the United Nations Department of Technical Cooperation for Development (DTCD) and the UN Trust Fund for Ageing as well as from two NGOs, HelpAge International and the St. Clares Riverside Medical Center, New Jersey, United States of America.

Training: Global training initiatives on ageing are being spearheaded by the International Institute on Ageing in Malta, in cooperation with specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system and a global network of gerontological institutes. The Institute's wide range of current activities are aimed at fulfilling the training needs of developing countries in the field of ageing and include: curriculum development, course and *in situ* training, research, advisory services and publication of training materials. The Institute offers a postgraduate one-year diploma course in gerontology and short-term training courses in geriatrics and gerontology.

Technical cooperation: The Department of Technical Cooperation for Development of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with UNOV/CSDHA, provides advisory services on ageing policies and programmes to developing countries. In 1990 and 1991, the Governments of the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guinea, Indonesia and Togo were provided with advisory services.

By January 1991, the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing had disbursed over $1 million in seed money grants to 42 projects. The Fund became operational in 1983, and has supported, for example, training, income-generation, policy-formulation, and needs assessments throughout the world. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and private organizations and individuals have contributed to the Fund, which is managed by the Director-General of UNOV. Governments and organizations can request financial assistance from the Fund through the field offices of the United Nations Development Programme in their country. For further information contact UNOV/CSDHA (address given above).

Efforts are under way to establish a technical cooperation network on ageing. The nucleus of the network would be established during an inter-regional training seminar now under consideration, subject to availability of resources. The seminar would train representatives of Government-appointed national mechanisms on ageing and non-governmental organizations in developing and least developed countries in project formulation, implementation, evaluation and funding. The proposed technical cooperation network could, as well, include voluntary retired experts and practitioners. Six percent of the United Nations Volunteers are retirees and efforts are underway to increase the participation of the elderly in the United Nations Volunteer programme.

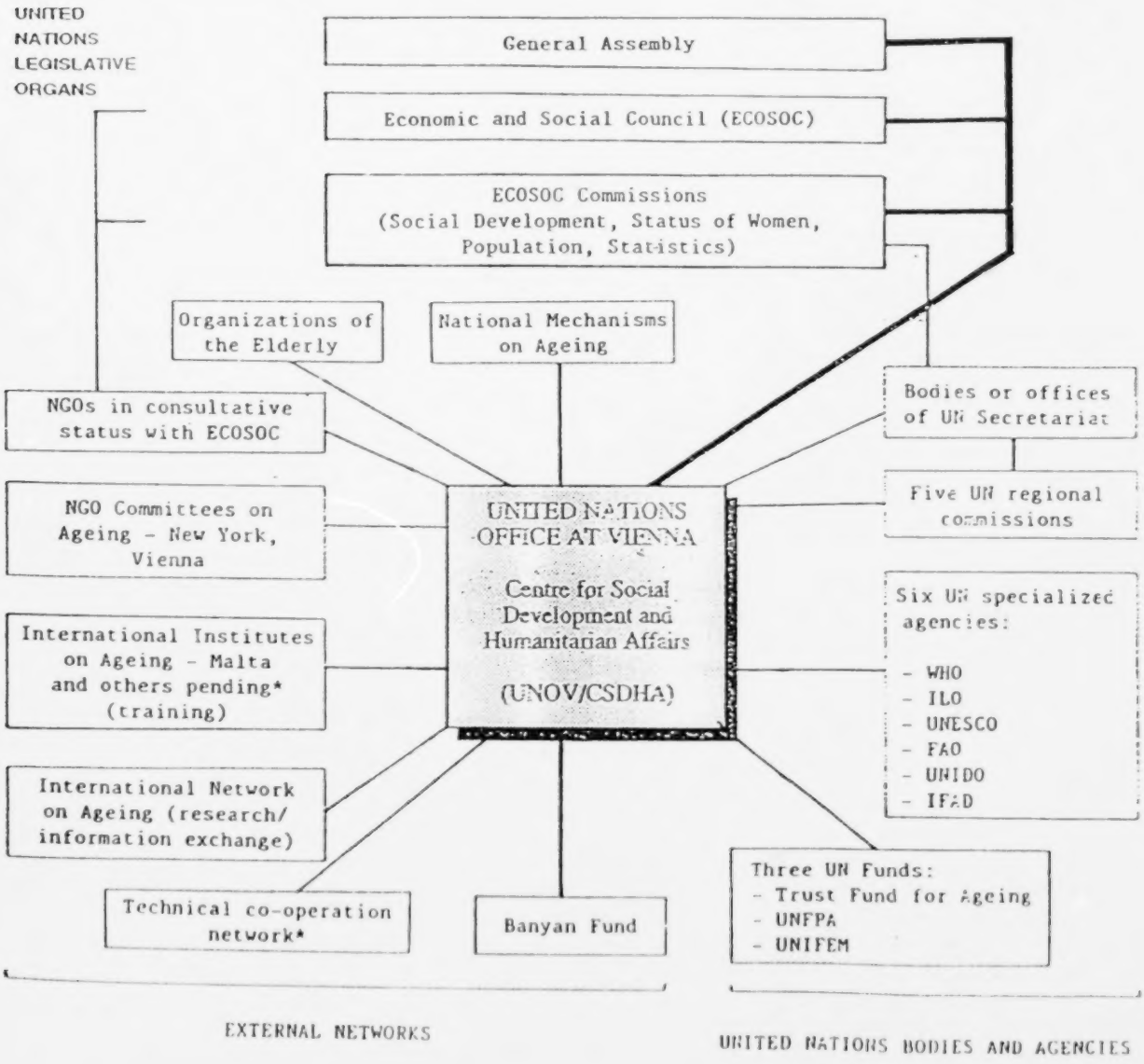
Resource mobilization: In the context of new approaches to international fund-raising, the Banyan Fund Association: A World Fund for Ageing, was established in May 1991. The main goal of the Banyan Fund is to promote activities which would enable the elderly to remain independent and contribute to society. The Banyan Fund will serve to secure or broker funds from corporations, foundations, charitable bodies and individuals, and allocate them for specific projects and programmes on ageing, especially in the developing countries. The Banyan Fund is located in France and incorporated as a private non-profit association under French law. Its statutes provide for its conversion into a foundation when it is able to accumulate the equity capital required by French law. It will then be known as The Banyan Foundation. Though autonomous and private, the Banyan Fund is under the patronage of the United Nations, in accordance with the mandates in General Assembly resolution 44/67 and 45/106. The Director-General of UNOV serves as Chairperson of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Banyan Fund.

Major dates:

1982	World Assembly on Ageing Adoption of International Plan of Action on Ageing (IPAA)
1985	First review and appraisal of the implementation of IPAA - to be made every four years Publication of the World Ageing Situation (first edition) - to be issued every six years
1989	Second review and appraisal of the implementation of IPAA
1990	General Assembly designates 1 October as the International Day for the Elderly
1991	Publication of the World Ageing Situation (second edition)
1992	Tenth anniversary of World Assembly on Ageing Targets are set for the year 2001
1993	Third review and appraisal of the implementation of IPAA
1997	Fourth review and appraisal of the implementation of IPAA Publication of the World Ageing Situation (third edition)
2001	Fifth review and appraisal of the implementation of IPAA End date for reaching targets set in 1992.

Key participants: The informal chart given below illustrates the broad range of actors in the United Nations programme on ageing, and attempts to demonstrate their participation in policy-formulation. As the focal point on ageing in UN system, UNOV/CSDHA consults with its networks in preparing policy-level reports, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to the Economic and Social Council (through the Commission for Social Development) and the General Assembly. Decisions of the Council and the Assembly are relayed back to the networks through UNOV/CSDHA. As well, UNOV/CSDHA cooperates with its networks in developing and implementing specific programmes and projects -- attempting to translate the ideals and principles of the International Plan of Action on Ageing into living conditions at the national and community levels.

An address list of specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations concerned with ageing is given below.


UNITED NATIONS LEGISLATIVE ORGANS
General Assembly
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
ECOSOC Commissions (Social Development, Status of Women, Population, Statistics)
Organizations of the Elderly
National Mechanisms on Ageing
NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC
Bodies or offices of UN Secretariat
NGO Committees on Ageing - New York, Vienna
Five UN regional commissions
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT VIENNA
Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
(UNOV/CSDHA)
Six UN specialized agencies:
- WHO
- ILO
- UNESCO
- FAO
- UNIDO
- IFAD
International Institutes on Ageing - Malta and others pending* (training)
International Network on Ageing (research/ information exchange)
Technical co-operation network*
Banyan Fund
Three UN Funds:
- Trust Fund for Ageing
- UNFPA
- UNIFEM
EXTERNAL NETWORKS
UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND AGENCIES

* Being formed or under consideration

For information only. Not an official document

United Nations bodies or offices concerned with ageing:

DIESA focal point on ageing
Department of International Economic
and Social Affairs
UN Headquarters, N.Y. 10017
New York, USA

DTCD focal point on ageing
Department of Technical Co-operation
for Development
UN Headquarters, N.Y. 10017
New York, USA

DPI focal point on ageing
Department of Public Information
UN Headquarters, N.Y. 10017
New York, USA

UNICEF focal point on ageing
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Three United Nations Plaza
N.Y. 10017, New York, USA

UNDP focal point on ageing
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
One United Nations Plaza
N.Y. 10017, New York, USA

UNFPA focal point on ageing
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
220 East 42nd Street
N.Y. 10017-5880, USA

UNRWA focal point on ageing
United Nations Relief And Works
Agency For Palestine Refugees
in the Near East (UNRWA)
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 700
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

UNU focal point on ageing
United Nations University (UNU)
Toho Seimei Building
15-1 Shibuya 2-chome
Shibuya-ku
Tokyo 150, Japan

HABITAT focal point on ageing
United Nations Centre For
Human Settlements (HABITAT)
UN Office at Nairobi
P.O. Box 30030
Nairobi, Kenya

UNHCR focal point on ageing
United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees (UNHCR)
Centre William Rappart
154 rue de Lausanne
CH-1202 Geneva

INSTRAW focal point on ageing
International Research and Training
Institute for the Advancement of Women
Calle César Nicolás Penson 102-A
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

UNIFEM focal point on ageing
United Nations Development
Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
Room FF-616
304 East 45th Street
N.Y. 10017, New York, USA

UNV focal point on ageing
United Nations Volunteers (UNV)
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

United Nations regional commissions:

ECA focal point on ageing
Economic Commission for Africa
P. O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ECE focal point on ageing
Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

ECLAC focal point on ageing
Economic Commission for Latin America
and the Caribbean
Casilla 179-D, Santiago, Chile

ESCAP focal point on ageing
Economic and Social Commission for
Asia and the Pacific
UN Building, Rajdamnern Avenue,
Bangkok 10200, Thailand

ESCWA focal point on ageing
Economic and Social Commission
for Western Asia
c/o UNDP Amman, P. O. Box 35286
Amman, Jordan

United Nations specialized agencies concerned with ageing:

ILO focal point on ageing
International Labour Organisation
4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

FAO focal point on ageing
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations (FAO)
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy

UNESCO focal point on ageing
United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
7, Place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris, France

WHO focal point on ageing
World Health Organization
20, avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

IFAD focal point on ageing
International Fund for Agricultural
Development (IFAD)
Via del Serafico 107
00142 Rome, Italy

UNIDO focal point on ageing
United Nations Industrial
Development Organization
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 300
A-1400 Vienna, Austria